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ABSTRACT

On overview of the Model 3 Communication Skills lexicon, consisting of three lists of words, developed by the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) for use in communication skills instruction in K-6 is presented in this document. Three components (described in three other documents) of the Model 3 communication skills lexicon are defined. The entry lexicon is the set of words known by children entering kindergarten, the general lexicon is the set of words learned in K-6--exclusive of the words in the technical lexicon, and the technical lexicon is the set of words used by the schools to teach various subjects. Basic sources are indicated for use in determining the words in each of these components. (Author/RB)

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COMPONENTS OF A MOD 3 LEXICON

Bruce Cronnell

ABSTRACT

Three components of a Mod 3 Communication Skills lexicon are defined. The entry lexicon is the set of words known by children entering kindergarten. The general lexicon is the set of words learned during K-6, exclusive of those words in the technical lexicon, which is the set of technical terms employed in subject area instruction. Basic sources are indicated for use in determining the words in each of these components.

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COMPONENTS OF A MOD 3 LEXICON

This is the first of two papers which will describe the nature of the Mod 3 Communication Skills lexicon. This paper (Rules of Correspondence activity, Event 208.5.4) describes the components of the lexicon and may somewhat overlap the second paper (Event 208.5.5) which will indicate criteria for inclusion and exclusion of words. A subsequent paper (Event 208.5.7) will combine these two papers to present a complete description of the word content of the Mod 3 lexicon.

The Mod 3 lexicon is to include all those words which may be needed for Communication Skills instruction from kindergarten through sixth grade.[1] The lexicon is divided into three components which will be described below: the entry lexicon, the general lexicon, and the technical lexicon. The components will not necessarily be separated physically. The Mod 3 lexicon will include all words listed alphabetically, but coded--E, G, T--for component.

Entry Lexicon

The entry lexicon is that set of words known by children entering kindergarten, which forms the base for all communication skills instruction.[2] While more words are undoubtedly known than used, word use is more readily studied and will be employed to determine words

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[1]Should it be decided to extend instruction below kindergarten, the lexicon can be minimally revised to allow such changes. See footnotes 2 and 3.

[2]If instruction is extended below the kindergarten level, the entry lexicon will be a subset of that defined here. However, since there are few sources of preschool vocabulary, such a lexicon will be more difficult to determine.

known. While it is probable that a sample of word use cannot be extended to the whole population, it should be at least representative of words known by all children entering kindergarten.

The main source of words for the entry lexicon will be Kolson (1960), who recorded kindergarten children's speech at home, at school, and in a structured setting in which the children responded to pictures. 897,973 running words were collected in the Pittsburg, Pa., Washington, D.C., and Portland, Oregon areas, from the 494 children chosen by socioeconomic class in proportion to the general population and including 12% nonwhite. Kolson lists 3,728 words which occurred at least seven times each. These words will be supplemented by words from the International Kindergarten Union study (Horn and others, 1928, of which Kolson, 1960, is a replication), Murphy and others (1957), and Weaver (1955). (See Cronnell, 1969a, for further information on these sources.)

Proper names are part of the entry lexicon. These will be primarily first names, but some surnames will be included; Cronnell (1969b) will serve as a basic source. It is not expected that all kindergarten children will know all proper names; knowledge depends on particular experience. However, children entering kindergarten know a large number of names and can easily learn more. Moreover, names may comprise a substantial amount of reading (up to 9% in adult texts, Engels, 1968) and are necessary for the writing of stories. Historical and literary names, as well as geographical names, will be included in the technical and general lexica.

Technical Lexicon

The technical lexicon is the school's explicit contribution to vocabulary; it is the technical terminology introduced by the schools in order to teach various school subjects. The technical lexicon is defined as that set of words commonly used in a discipline, but not commonly used in nonacademic activities. Thus, while square and circle are used in arithmetic, they are in common use outside the school and are not considered to be in the technical lexicon. On the other hand, parallelogram and octogon have little or no existence (for children, at least) outside the classroom and are considered to be in the technical lexicon.

Words in the technical lexicon are clearly placed in the child's vocabulary by the school. The time of their introduction is set by the textbook and/or the curriculum, and they are thus rather precisely leveled, if not by grade, at least by sequence. It appears, then, that the technical lexicon is generally outside the domain of communication skills, which may not use words from it until they have been introduced in other curricular areas, although certain aspects of communication skills instruction (e.g., spelling-to-sound correspondences) may be useful to prepare students for outside reading of technical terms.

Words for the technical lexicon will come from the following subject areas (as taken from *A guide to curriculum development and course of study for elementary schools of Los Angeles County*, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, 1965):

1. Language arts
    a. writing*

b. spelling*

c. grammar*

d. reading*

e. literature*

(The guide also lists speaking and listening, but these areas appear to have no special terminology in elementary school.)

2. Music*

3. Visual arts

4. Homemaking

5. Industrial arts

6. Healthful living

a. health education*

b. physical education

c. recreation

7. Mathematics*

8. Science*

9. Social studies*

The asterisked subjects have California state-adopted textbooks, which will be used as a source of words. The state divides (9) social studies between history and geography; these divisions will be used for obtaining the technical lexicon. The following lists the grade levels of state-adoped texts:

	Basic	Supplementary	Teacher
1. a. writing ("handwriting")	1-4		5-6
b. spelling	1-6		
c. grammar ("English")	1-6	(dictionaries 3-6)	
d. reading	1-6	1-6	K
e. literature	1-6	3-6	
2. Music	2-6		K-1
6. a. health education	1-6		
7. Mathematics	1-6	K-6	K-6
8. Science	1-6	1-6	
9. a. geography	4-6	2-6	
b. history	4-6	4-6	

Supplementary and teachers texts will be used as sources only when there are no basic texts at that grade level. It must still be determined whether or what texts may be used as sources in the following areas: visual arts, homemaking, industrial arts, physical education, recreation. If there are no appropriate texts, curriculum guides will be used.

California state-adopted texts are being employed as sources for these reasons:

1. SWRL is located in California;
2. primary, particularly initial, users of SWRL materials are in California;
3. a large number of American elementary school children are in California (nearly 9% in 1969, according to the Statistical Abstracts of the United States);
4. textbooks used in California are also used elsewhere.

Similar reasons can be given for employing the Los Angeles County curriculum guide.

In addition to California state-adoped texts, at least one other source will be used for each content area. Lacking a consensus view of content domain, these sources will be chosen to be representative of current conceptions of elementary school curriculum, and will be texts or curriculum guides. Generally, two sources (including the California state-adopted texts) should be sufficient to determine the basic terminology of a subject area. When the two sources indicate substantial disagreement, however, additional sources will be employed until a basic vocabulary, applicable to most views of the field, can be determined.

General Lexicon

The general lexicon includes those words learned by children after entering kindergarten and by the end of sixth grade. It is thus all words known by K-6 children exclusive of the entry and technical lexicon.[3] It is the community's contribution to the vocabulary growth of elementary school children. The basic source of words in the general lexicon will be the Rinsland (1945) list of words used by elementary school children, supplemented by other appropriate sources given in Cronnell (1969a). Further investigation is needed to determine the availability of other, more up-to-date sources, particularly for the

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[3]Should instruction be extended below the kindergarten level, the general lexicon will cover levels x-6, with appropriate words from the entry lexicon (as defined in this paper) added to it.

upper elementary grades.

Assignment of Words to Components

The above description of the three components of the lexicon assumes clear assignment of words to each component. However, while the entry lexicon can be clearly defined, it appears much more difficult to differentiate between the general and technical lexicon. A tentative distinction is: a technical word from a school subject is assigned to the technical lexicon if it is not in general adult use, as determined by presence in the Kučera and Francis (1967) word list. It may be necessary to work at actual lexicon compilation before an adequate distinction can be made.

Another problem arises with words having two or more meanings, each meaning assignable to a different lexicon component, e.g.,

foot (body part): entry; foot (12 inches): general
response (answer): general; response (psychology): technical.

In such cases it appears appropriate to assign two component designations to the word and to assign level information for each component meaning.

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